

## Message Text

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47

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /026 W  
----- 014682

R 231140Z FEB 75  
FM AMEMBASSY KABUL  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1485  
INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD  
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI  
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L KABUL 1155

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PFOR, AF, PK  
SUBJECT: AFGHAN-PAK RELATIONS - CURRENT CRISIS

REF: KABUL 1088

1. AS OF FEBRUARY 23RD AND PRIOR TO ANY GOVERNMENT OF AFGHANISTAN (GOA) KNOWLEDGE OF THE PLANNED ANNOUNCEMENT OF LIFTING OF THE SOUTH ASIAN ARMS EMBARGO, IT IS OUR GENERAL IMPRESSION HERE THAT THE PAKISTAN/AFGHANISTAN SITUATION HAS STABILIZED AND THE CRISIS ATMOSPHERE WHICH WE HAVE FELT VERY STRONGLY FROM THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MFA) OVER THE PAST WEEK HAS PEAKED AND MAY BE SUBSIDING SOMEWHAT. GOA MEDIA CONTINUE TO FLAIL AWAY AT GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN (GOP) USING USUAL RHETORIC AND LIBERAL QUOTATIONS FROM FOREIGN NEWS THAT SUPPORT THE GOA POINT OF VIEW. THERE CONTINUES TO BE NO EVIDENCE OF ANY MILITARY OR SECURITY MOVES WHICH MIGHT BE DIRECTED AGAINST PAKISTAN. SOME DEFENSIVE STEPS HAVE BEEN TAKEN SUCH AS INCREASING PATROLS BETWEEN JALALABAD AND TORKHAM (BORDER CITY) AND PLACING A FEW AIRCRAFT ON ALERT AT EACH OF THE ACTIVE MILITARY AIR BASES.

2. THERE ARE TWO INGREDIENTS IN THE PRESENT SITUATION WHICH MAY PROVE TROUBLESOME OVER THE LONG RUN -- ONE IS THE  
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EMERGENCE OF AJMAL KHATTAK AND THE "REVOLUTIONARY DEMOCRATIC

FRONT" AS AN ENTITY IN AFGHANISTAN. THUS FAR GOA IN THE PERSON OF DEPFONMIN WAHEED ABDULLAH HAS DENIED THAT GOA IS ALLOWING A LIBERATION MOVEMENT DIRECTED AT PAKISTAN TO OPERATE IN AFGHANISTAN, BUT KHATTAK WAS ALLOWED TO USE THE NAME OF HIS "REVOLUTIONARY" ORGANIZATION ON A LETTER TO THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE UN AND RELIABLE SOURCES TELL US THAT THERE HAS BEEN AN INCREASE IN CONTACTS BETWEEN KHATTAK AND REPRESENTATIVES OF THE AFGHAN ARMY.

3. ANOTHER INGREDIENT WHICH IS WORRISOME IS EVIDENCE FROM TWO DIPLOMATIC SOURCES -- ONE OF WHOM HAS GOOD CONTACTS IN THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR AND THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE -- THAT THE SOVIET EMBASSY HERE HAS, DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY, SUPPLIED FUNDS FOR USE BY KHATTAK'S "FRONT."

4. PROBABLE FACTORS WHICH WILL PREVENT GOA FROM PUSHING MATTERS BETWEEN AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN TO A CRISIS LEVEL INVOLVING ACTUAL HOSTILITIES ARE THE REALIZATION THAT THE AFGHAN ARMY IS NO MATCH FOR THE PAKS; THAT THE LAST TIME A CRISIS WAS PRECIPITATED WHICH CAUSED THE PAKISTANIS TO CLOSE THE PAK-AF BORDER (1963) THE RESULTANT DISLOCATION WAS PREJUDICIAL TO AFGHANISTAN (AND PROBABLY CAUSED THE THEN PRIME MINISTER DAOUD'S RESIGNATION); AND THE FACT THAT ARAB COUNTRIES HAVE MADE IT MORE OR LESS CLEAR TO AFGHANISTAN, ACCORDING TO THE EGYPTIAN AND SAUDI AMBASSADORS HERE, THAT IF A CHOICE HAS TO BE MADE THEY WILL PROBABLY COME DOWN ON THE SIDE OF PAKISTAN. IRANIANS HAVE NOT TOLD US MUCH ABOUT THEIR VIEWS IN THIS CURRENT CRISIS, BUT WE BELIEVE THAT BEST AFGHANS COULD HOPE FOR FROM IRANIANS WOULD BE NEUTRALITY.

5. THEREFORE, FOR TIME BEING WE PLAN TO CONTINUE OUR POSTURE OF URGING RESTRAINT AND WATCHING DEVELOPMENTS CLOSELY. WE PARTICULARLY WILL BE LOOKING FOR MORE EVIDENCE OF DIRECT RUSSIAN INVOLVEMENT HERE AND COLLATERAL STORY THAT IRAQI EMBASSY KABUL HAS BEEN SUPPLYING ARMS TO INSURGENTS IN PAKISTAN. THERE IS POSSIBILITY, OF COURSE, THAT NEWS OF LIFTING OF ARMS EMBARGO WILL STIMULATE UNUSUALLY STRONG REACTION HERE IN LIGHT OF RECENT PAK-AFGHAN TENSION, BUT WE CONTINUE TO THINK THAT GOA OVER LONGER RUN APPRECIATES CONFIDENTIAL

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U.S. PRESENCE AS COUNTERBALANCE TO THE USSR AND THEREFORE THAT PRESIDENT DAOUD WILL NOT PERMIT ANY SERIOUS EROSION IN U.S.-AFGHAN BILATERAL RELATIONS. IF, HOWEVER, IN CONJUNCTION WITH CHANGE IN ARMS POLICY, GOP WERE TO ACCUSE AFGHANISTAN OF DIRECT COMPLICITY IN SHERPAO DEATH AND TAKE WHAT GOA WOULD CONSIDER HOSTILE STEPS (E.G., CLOSING THE PAK-AFGHAN BORDER OR OVERFLIGHTS),GOA ANTI-U.S. REACTION WOULD BE STRONGER AND OF LONGER DURATION.

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** Z  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** FOREIGN RELATIONS, ARMS, POLITICAL SITUATION, MILITARY SALES  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 23 FEB 1975  
**Decaption Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Decaption Note:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** SmithRJ  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1975KABUL01155  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** D750064-0183  
**From:** KABUL  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
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**Line Count:** 117  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Office:** ACTION SS  
**Original Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** EXDIS  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 3  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** EXDIS  
**Reference:** 75 KABUL 1088  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** SmithRJ  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 29 JUL 2003  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <29 JUL 2003 by ElyME>; APPROVED <21 NOV 2003 by SmithRJ>  
**Review Markings:**

Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
05 JUL 2006

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** AFGHAN-PAK RELATIONS - CURRENT CRISIS  
**TAGS:** PFOR, AF, PK, US  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006